

REDMOND PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

March 16, 2005

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Snodgrass, Commissioners Allen, Dunn, McCarthy, Parnell, Petitpas, Querry

STAFF PRESENT: Terry Marpert, Kim Dietz, Dianna Broadie, Redmond Planning Department; Joel Pfundt, Don Cairns, Redmond Public Works Department

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Snodgrass in the Public Safety Building Council Chambers.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

With the addition of a discussion of retreat topics, the agenda was approved by acclamation.

ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE – None

PUBLIC HEARING AND STUDY SESSION

Update of the Comprehensive Plan Introduction and Neighborhood Element

Chair Snodgrass opened the public hearing.

Planner Dianna Broadie briefly explained the changes proposed for the Introduction chapter.

Planner Kim Dietz explained the changes proposed for the Neighborhoods Element, and said that the revisions are not drastic. Policies have been combined where appropriate to reduce the amount of verbiage. Communication on all levels is highlighted in the chapter. The Neighborhood Element standardizes a review process for neighborhood plan updates, though it does not establish exact steps to take in each case. The chapter establishes a regular schedule for review of the neighborhood plans; each neighborhood plan will be reviewed every six years, sooner if there are priority issues. The neighborhood grant matching program is emphasized in the chapter as a means of upgrading neighborhoods. The strategic neighborhoods team concept is highlighted in the document; this team is new to the document but is something that has been informally utilized in the past. The document also places an emphasis on small capital improvements.

There were no members of the public present to address the Commission in the public hearing.

Chair Snodgrass declared the public hearing closed.

Chair Snodgrass turned to Commissioner Allen to lead the study session discussion.

Commissioner Allen referred first to the last sentence of Policy NP-1 which talks about priority neighborhoods. She asked how a neighborhood rises to the level of priority status. Ms. Dietz said a neighborhood can rise to the level of priority in cases where a lot of development occurs in the general area. However, because the plan looks out 20 years, a certain degree of flexibility is required, so it cannot be said that the only trigger is development activity. Major transportation changes could also be a trigger.

Commissioner Allen allowed that the second issue on the issues list has been addressed to her satisfaction.

Commissioner Allen pointed out that Policy NP-2 speaks to the preparation and adoption of neighborhood plans. The old NP-3 addresses the development and review of neighborhood plans. The new policy language appears to limit the scope. Ms. Dietz noted that the principles of the old NP-3 are covered in the new Policy NP-1, Policy NP-2 and Policy NP-9. Commissioner Allen proposed having Policy NP-2 refer to preparation, adoption and review of neighborhood plans.

Commissioner Allen indicated satisfaction with the response of staff concerning Policy NP-3. Chair Snodgrass suggested that because, in the future, there may be a new neighborhood, it would make sense to revise the policy to read "...in preparing neighborhood plans and updates...." His suggestion was accepted.

With regard to Issue 5, Commissioner Allen indicated a concern with bullet number 8 under Policy NP-3 given objections raised by neighborhoods with respect to commercial uses in neighborhoods. Ms. Broadie pointed out that some of the neighborhoods are largely business park. Ms. Dietz added that the items are intended to serve only as discussion issues when neighborhood groups are formed; the list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Chair Snodgrass argued in favor of retaining the policy language as proposed. Over the years the experts have said that neighborhood commercial done properly is a valuable addition to neighborhoods and to the city as a whole. Such uses will always be seen as unpopular, but they are good planning concepts and because of the advantages they offer the neighborhoods should be urged to consider them.

There was consensus to leave the language unchanged.

Commissioner Allen proposed changing the word "including" to "such as" in bullet number 9. There was consensus to do that.

With regard to the existing Policy NP-8, Commissioner Allen said she did not see the issue of integrating adopted neighborhood plans into the Neighborhood Element picked up in any of the new policies. Ms. Dietz answered that the concept of integration was replaced with the notion of amending the policies.

Commissioner Petitpas called attention to Issue 12 and said nothing is said about how residents are to go about becoming applicants to serve as neighborhood representatives. The language says only how people are chosen. Ms. Dietz said in the early stages of reviewing or updating a neighborhood plan every piece of information mailed to the residents includes contact information and a call for those interested in being involved in the process. Survey cards are also used. Focus groups are generally comprised of people who have had input with the city in the past. Direct calls are made only where no one expresses an interest in serving. Commissioner Petitpas stressed the need for notice to be provided as early as possible to ensure broad representation.

Commissioner McCarthy allowed that while the city does a great deal to get citizens involved, the onus really should be on the local neighborhood.

There was consensus regarding the need to use all available means to provide broad notice to a neighborhood prior to the start of a process to update or review any neighborhood plan. There was also agreement that the city should retain a list of citizens who are willing to participate.

Staff proposed using the language “Use all reasonable means to initiate and encourage involvement in a neighborhood plan update and ensure the maximum involvement of the neighborhood at key milestones in the process.” Chair Snodgrass proposed adding the language to Policy NP-1. He further proposed revising the explanatory language to read “To maximize public input, neighborhood plans should be developed under the guidance of citizen advisory committees or similar representative public groups.”

Commissioner Dunn asked if there would be any merit to including in the policy language a listing of the deliverables associated with neighborhood plan reviews groups. Ms. Dietz suggested that such direction is more suitable to the toolkit, which changes over time.

Commissioner Dunn proposed the addition of a new policy dealing with communication, under which many of the particulars associated with neighborhood plan deliverables would be housed, along with policy language directing the development of a network of associations and organizations within the neighborhoods over time for the purpose of fostering communication. Commissioner Query suggested crafting an entirely new section with explanatory language speaking to the broader concepts of how a CAC is to be formed, how members will be solicited, how specific steps within the update process are to be communicated, and how the final product will be communicated.

Commissioner McCarthy proposed adding the concepts to Policy NP-9 instead of creating a whole new policy or section. There was general agreement to move in that direction.

Commissioner Dunn stressed the need to include language calling for any neighborhood CAC to be both representative and diverse. Chair Snodgrass said that issue is covered in the explanatory text of Policy NP-1 that the Commission previously agreed to.

Commissioner Allen noted that the old Policy NP-11 describes how conflicts between a neighborhood plan and other chapters are to be resolved. That notion has not been carried

forward into the new policies. Ms. Dietz said all neighborhood plans have been updated and are currently in alignment with the Comprehensive Plan.

Chair Snodgrass suggested that the last sentence of the existing Policy NP-11 which reads “In other cases of conflict the neighborhood policies control” should be retained. There was agreement to do that.

With regard to planning and scheduling key milestones in the process, Ms. Dietz informed Commissioner Dunn that along the way there will be key check-in points. The Commission will come into play during the notification of the neighborhood plan update and will at time to time be given a status report as the process moves forward. Status reports could be labeled as key milestones.

Commissioner Query noted that as proposed the first point at which the Commission will be engaged is when it reviews the neighborhood vision and findings. That should be considered to be a milestone.

Commissioner Dunn said as a resident she would like to know when a neighborhood planning process starts, when to submit a list of issues to be addressed, and when there are opportunities to address or petition the CAC. Ms. Dietz noted that all vision items involve the general community. Commissioner Dunn stressed the need for the milestones to be tied to the communication process to ensure good feedback. Ms. Dietz concurred and agreed to add to the text of the policy a listing of some of the key milestones.

Commissioner Parnell said he would like to see a specific policy added highlighting the fact that a web forum will be used for CAC members to share information with each other and to generate additional public comment. The site could also house the complete collection of documents submitted on and related to the process. Commissioner Parnell agreed to work off-line with staff on the wording.

The Commission offered no revisions to the introduction section.

****BREAK****

STUDY SESSION

Transportation Master Plan

Chair Snodgrass noted that staff had distributed to the Commissioners copies of seven emails received concerning the Transportation Master Plan and indicated that they would be made part of the public hearing record.

Answering a question asked by Chair Snodgrass, Engineering Manager Don Cairns said there is enough money left in the budget to finish the plan. Consultant Jim Charlier will visit Redmond again for the last time as part of this project on March 22.

Chair Snodgrass said the transportation projects on the list for discussion are the 172nd extension, the 160th extension, and the designation of the Education Hill multimodal corridor. Mr. Cairns said the Council has on its list those projects plus Willows Road, the bike lanes on 148th from 51st to Willows Road, and an alternate connection for bike lanes using the Old Redmond Road.

Commissioner Parnell said he would like to discuss the pedestrian/emergency services/bicycle connection from Redmond Town Center to central Marymoor park. Commissioner Dunn concurred.

Commissioner Dunn commented that funding all projects related to transit infrastructure will be vitally important to attracting high-capacity transit to Redmond. Those projects should be discussed. She also expressed a desire to discuss converting Cleveland to a main street concept, and converting Redmond Way to whatever it is proposed for; the Commission should have a clear understanding of what is supposed to happen and when it will occur.

Commissioner Dunn said the Commission should also discuss what is to happen ultimately with the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe right-of-way. Mr. Pfundt said there is currently no plan for what to do with the right-of-way. Clearly the city should acquire it, but it will take additional study and research to determine what it should become. Mr. Cairns said the Council did not elect to fund a study of the right-of-way and what should be done with it over time. They want to go through a process with the community to define what it should look like in the coming years and then figure out how to pay for it.

Commissioner Dunn suggested a discussion of the Bear Creek extension project. Additionally, no capacity solution is proposed for the section of Avondale Road north of Union Hill Road connecting to SR-520, and the model does not show additional delay. Unless something is done, the congestion will only get worse, and the Commission should understand why the modeling does not show that. Union Hill and Novelty Hill can be lumped in with that discussion.

Commissioner Dunn said the Commission should also understand how far the transportation plan goes toward meeting the neighborhood transportation objectives.

Commissioner Petitpas said she would like to see a map showing the proposed connections in the Downtown. She said she also would like a better understanding of why there needs to be seven lanes on Union Hill Road feeding into only two lanes on Avondale Road, and what the city will get for the \$150,000 annual budget for the neighborhood traffic calming program.

Commissioner Querry said she would like to know why on the bicycle facilities, sidewalk improvement and safety programs “center” is listed as not applicable. Mr. Pfundt said they are not being excluded but are handled on a citywide basis.

Commissioner Allen asked if there is any rank ordering within the various categories, to which Mr. Pfundt replied that there is not.

Turning to the issues on Table 2, Mr. Marpert noted that the Commission had earlier discussed the fact that there is some lack of clarity in the TMP about what a standard is and what a

measurement is. He said if it is understood that the level of service standard is equal to implementation of the TFP, the issue of concurrency boils down to whether or not the TFP is built proportionate to growth in the city. That would be an annual test. Staff will continuously monitor the activity in a range of travel modes, and that may signal a need to stop and look at how the TFP is being implemented. If the indicators show problems in a particular area, there will be no waiting for the annual test before addressing the problem.

Mr. Pfundt noted that the current approach is to test each individual development for concurrency. The annual approach forecasts growth for the upcoming year and looks at the amount of capacity left to allow growth. The approach will test the amount of development capacity for the upcoming year.

Mr. Marpert agreed that the language could be clearer. The bottom line is the policy needs to be carried out in the TMP. Mr. Cairns agreed with the suggestion of Chair Snodgrass to simply strike the last sentence.

Commissioner Dunn reiterated her desire to see the language crafted in a way that will allow for some project-specific testing and the right to impose additional requirements on a project-specific basis. Mr. Marpert said the key policies for concurrency are in the already adopted Transportation Element. He agreed that the language in the TMP is confusing and needs to be revised. No project-specific requirements will be included; the most that could happen would be an earlier review of the plan-based approach.

Chair Snodgrass suggested that project-specific issues will be uncovered as part of the SEPA review. Mr. Marpert allowed that to some degree that is correct. He stressed that it is not the intent of the city, however, to charge a developer through SEPA and then again through an impact fee to pay for the system. SEPA mitigation will be tied to safety and health issues.

Commissioner Allen commented that in formulating the vision the Commission specifically discussed the example of a large-scale use such as Costco. The conclusion reached was that plan-based concurrency would not allow the city to consider the use and its unique impacts on the city; the most that could be done would be to trigger a citywide review. Mr. Cairns explained that concurrency is nothing more than an on-off switch. SEPA goes beyond that and focuses on actual impacts. If citywide development exceeds a predetermined threshold point, it may be necessary to examine individual projects for systemwide compliance.

Chair Snodgrass said the paragraph in question does not say that, appears to conflict with the transportation vision, and needs to be substantially revised.

Focusing on the fourth paragraph, Mr. Marpert allowed that as written the language is untrue. The list of alternatives is included under Policy TR-18, giving choices to developers. It was agreed that the paragraph should be rewritten to include all of the alternatives listed in Policy TR-18.

Commissioner Allen asked who in the city will make the actual determination of being out of concurrency, and what discretion will be involved in making the decision. Mr. Marpert said the

intent is to establish the details in the concurrency ordinance. In short, the annual concurrency test will be the determining factor. If the performance measures for each category indicate a problem, the concurrency issue could be raised sooner. Who would raise the issue and who would make the decisions are yet to be determined. There was agreement that the Council should be the body making the final decision.

The issue of what role, if any, the Commission should play in the concurrency picture was placed in the parking lot for later discussion.

Chair Snodgrass pointed out the need to substitute “measures” for “standards” in the section on multimodal level of service.

Commissioner Allen asked if the volume/capacity modeling could be done based on actual travel times rather than the theoretical capacity of the system. Mr. Pfundt said while it would be possible to take that approach, it would be resource intensive and very expensive.

Commissioner Dunn suggested that where the V/C ratio is projected to exceed 1:1, resulting primarily from the overuse of single-occupancy vehicles, the city should focus its efforts on alternative modes of travel.

Chair Snodgrass asked staff to provide responses for each issue on the list not yet discussed by the Commission.

REPORTS

The Commissioners agreed that the City Attorney should attend the retreat and provide an update with regard to legal issues that have come into play over the past couple of years. There was also agreement that staff should report on the development that has occurred around the city over the past couple of years.

Mr. Marpert noted that a new Chair and Vice-Chair will need to be elected at the retreat.

SCHEDULING/TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING(S)

ADJOURN

Chair Snodgrass adjourned the meeting at 9:46 (?) p.m.

Minutes Approved On:

Recording Secretary